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A Trip to Manteca

On April 3, 1932, a party, of which I was a member, took a trip to the territory west of Manteca, San Joaquin County, a land full of small sloughs and swampy areas. Although watered areas and irrigated lands are plentiful, this region is typically dry in its flora, and most of the birds are typical dry-country species.

We made our first stop near a marshy pond, and found in it three Cinnamon Teal. An American Egret was flying nearby, two Greater Yellow-legs were feeding on the shore, and hawking above were Swallows of several species. In a garden, back of a nearby house, we discovered two gorgeous male Bullock Orioles. Western Kingbirds were common all around and were steady company for the rest of the day.

Proceeding on, we made a stop near a bridge, and found Cliff Swallows abundant, the colony just being started. American Goldfinches were extremely numerous, over a hundred being seen in one small field.

Soon we arrived at the marshy country, and discovered first a hole in an oak, inhabited by a female Screech Owl, which was petted and photographed before being released. A visit to a last year's Red-bellied Hawk nest was fruitless, and a dead unidentifiable hawk found nearby indicated a possible reason for the abandonment of the site.

Red-bellied Hawks were not seen until the latter part of the trip, when a pair was observed and heard near a clump of oaks.

Three Cowbirds were seen in the vicinity and were observed at close range. A Florida Gallinule was discovered on the opposite side of a slough, and was finally made to leave cover by the shouting and clod-hurling of the entire party.

A visit to a grove of live oaks yielded a nest of Great-horned Owls, containing two ghostly nestlings, one quite a bit older than the other. Upon capturing them, an experiment was attempted, and the writer, much enthused by Dr. Pickwell's discoveries in avian psychology, found out very definitely that the older owlet was capable of delivering a hard bite, while the younger merely gave the usual intimidation display, and even when the finger was actually inserted in the bill, he did not exert any pressure.

Barn Owls were observed at short intervals along the way, and numerous House Wrens and two Western Gnatcatchers were seen nearby. Yellow-billed Magpies were seen along the highway, but were not numerous. A colony of Black-crowned Night Herons was found in a cypress swamp, and a colony of Great Blue Herons in a few live oaks nearby.

After spending most of the day exploring this interesting country, we returned home via Corral Hollow and Tesla, the only nesting range of the Say Phoebe in the Bay Region. In all, four nests were found, two containing almost full-grown young, one with one egg, and one empty.

Rock Wrens were quite common, and two empty nests were found with the usual collection of pebbles around them. Several Barn Owls were flushed from various holes in the cliffs, which are mostly conglomerate rock, and full of fissures and crannies.

A bobcat was seen running up the valley to his den, making the last observation of any kind for the day.

Surely no trip for the parlor student, but for an ornithologist who likes to hike, the territory holds unlimited possibilities.

Harold Swanton, Oakland, California. May 3, 1932.



Slender-billed Nuthatch: We have watched in recent years near Napa two nests of this bird. Both were within three feet of the ground; one in a natural cavity in an orchard tree close to a country dwelling.

The other is in a log bird house put up by a pupil at Soda Canon School, near the hills about three miles north of Napa. This bird house is large: 12 inches in diameter, 18 inches high, with a 1¾-inch entrance hole at the extreme top. It is set at the bottom of an open tank-house frame, about two feet from the ground, over an artificial pool. It apparently is completely open to the hazard of snakes, jays, etc. The bird is now feeding young.

Have any of your readers had nuthatches nesting in artificial houses? If so, I should be interested to know.

E. L. Bickford, Napa, California. May 2, 1932.



Tree Swallows: Tree Swallows were again seen at my place in Napa about April 24, after an absence of a number of years. They were attracted to and took possession of a box made from a section of 6-inch lock-joint wooden water-pipe laid horizontally, which was capped with a false roof and placed on top of a forty-foot public-service corporation pole.

E. L. Bickford, Napa, California. May 2, 1932.



Mocking Birds: According to Mr. Carter H. Johnston, president of the Richmond Bird Club, Mocking Birds seem to be increasing in Richmond, California. In the vicinity of the City Hall or the Grant School one may see these wonderful singers almost any time. At the March meeting of the club seven members reported that they had seen Mocking Birds nesting at or near their homes. Mr. T. A. Lawney has knowledge of their having nested at his home in Richmond for the last four years.

Mr. Johnston has a record of one pair nesting at the City Hall four years ago. At his home one bird remains near the house frequently, but will not come to the feeding trays.

Nests have also been reported by non-members living in Pinole.



Observations in the San Joaquin Valley: Of the Arizona Hooded Oriole Dawson makes the notation "of probable occurrence in the Tulare Basin." I sat under a very tall fan-palm tree at the home of A. A. Daniells near Lindsay and watched a pair of these birds about their nest at various times during a week's visit from April 17 to 25, 1932. The birds are very quiet, a decided contrast to the Bullock Oriole. The male sang only briefly in the early morning.

Another find in the orange orchard was several pairs of Dwarf Cowbirds. Their size, distinctive bill, and other markings were noted at close range. The peculiar gurgle followed by a squeak, which constitutes their song, and their antics on greeting each other, were exactly as described by Dawson.

Near Crow's Landing on April 16, a flock of about three hundred Hudsonian Curlews afforded excitement for half an hour. They separated into about four flocks, rising from the damp meadows, flying overhead and settling to feed again, the several groups keeping within a few yards of each other. Their musical pipings added to the joy of our first near view of these birds.

Mary I. Compton, Berkeley, California. May 25, 1932.



May Field Trip was taken on Sunday, the 15th, to St. Mary's, Contra Costa County, with thirty-six members and thirteen guests. A light breeze from the west made the day perfect.

The birds were out in good numbers, singing their best songs and willing to be seen at close range. No doubt they were welcoming Mrs. Mexia, who had just returned from a three-year trip into the wilds of South America. Some of this welcome was for Mr. and Mrs. Millard, as well, two of our enthusiastic members whom we have missed, at our meetings and on our field trips, for nearly a year, due to the illness of Mrs. Millard.

The associations in this locality are typical Upper Sonoran Life Zone, which accounts for the presence of such species as the Western Kingbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Wood Pewee, Bullock Oriole and Lazuli Bunting.

The usual colony of Cliff Swallows are still using the old barn for nesting sites; House Wrens are nesting in the walnut tree near where the old house stood; Brewer Blackbirds are nesting in another tree nearby, while a pair of Linnets and a pair of Black-headed Grosbeaks are sharing the same elderberry bush as a nesting site. The row of eucalypti, along the road, continued to attract the usual bird population.

Red-breasted Nuthatches, discovered by Mr. A. B. Stephens, were overstaying their winter visit, or perhaps they have decided to become permanent residents.

A Kingfisher, a Killdeer and a Spotted Sandpiper, along the shores of the reservoir, added variety to our list for the day.

St. Mary's, formerly Cashion, is a comparatively new locality for Audubon Trips. Our first visit was in May, 1926, followed by another in May, 1927, and in 1928. On account of activities due to the building of St. Mary's College and the supposedly resultant disturbances to the bird population, no visits were made in 1929 and 1930. But a visit to this locality in May, 1931, quite a long time after the completion of the college, supplied a list of birds appreciably larger than on any previous visit and added seven new species to our records. This year four new records were added, Western Kingbird, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Robin and Pine Siskin, making a total of sixty-seven species for this locality.

After luncheon the party decided to visit one of the brush-covered hills in Reliez Valley where Bell Sparrows had been reported nesting. The enthusiastic members who climbed this hill were rewarded by the presence of four Bell Sparrows and a nest containing young. The chaparral here consists of adenostoma and salvia. From the hilltop, Violet-green Swallows were seen and a Golden Eagle sailed across the valley towards Mt. Diablo. A pair of Cooper Hawks were nesting in a live oak at the foot of the hill. Lark Sparrows were perched on the wire fence along the road.

Occupied nests of the following species were found in the vicinity of St. Mary's; Western Flycatcher, Cliff Swallow, House Wren, Pileolated Warbler, Bullock Oriole, Brewer Blackbird, Black-headed Grosbeak, Linnet.

A total list of fifty-seven species was noted as follows:

Turkey Vulture	Western Flycatcher	Yellow Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	Wood Pewee	Tolmie Warbler
Sparrow Hawk	Cliff Swallow	Pileolated Warbler
California Quail	California Jay	English Sparrow
Killdeer	Plain Titmouse	Meadowlark
Spotted Sandpiper	Bush-tit	Red-winged Blackbird
Mourning Dove	Slender-billed Nuthatch	Bullock Oriole
Anna Hummingbird	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Brewer Blackbird
Allen Hummingbird	Wren-tit	Black-headed Grosbeak
Kingfisher	House Wren	Lazuli Bunting
Red-shafted Flicker	Bewick Wren	Purple Finch
California Woodpecker	Robin	Linnet
Downy Woodpecker	Russet-backed Thrush	Pine Siskin
Nuttall Woodpecker	Western Bluebird	Green-backed Goldfinch
Western Kingbird	Cassin Vireo	Spotted Towhee
Ash-throated Flycatcher	Warbling Vireo	Brown Towhee
Black Phoebe	Lutescent Warbler	Song Sparrow

The following were noted in Reliez Valley: Cooper Hawk, Golden Eagle, Hairy Woodpecker, Violet-green Swallow, Lark and Bell Sparrows.

C. A. Bryant, historian.

Audubon Notes

June Meeting will be held on Thursday evening, the 9th, at 8 o'clock, room 19, 2nd floor, Ferry Building.

The speaker of the evening will be Mrs. Ynes Mexia, who has just returned from Brazil after a sojourn of two and a half years. Her subject will be "Some Common Birds of Central Brazil."



June Field Trip will be taken Sunday, the 12th, to Ross, Marin County, visiting Phoenix Lake, thence to Lagunitas and Alpine Lakes, returning to the picnic place below Phoenix Lake for supper. Those so desiring may start from Fairfax. Purchase round-trip ticket to Ross or Fairfax, 60c. Take Sausalito Ferry at 8:15 a. m. Bring food for two meals. C. A. Bryant, leader.



The Saturday study trips will be discontinued for the present.



May Meeting: The 178th regular meeting was held on May 12th, in room 19, Ferry Building, with forty-nine members and guests present. President Brighton C. Cain presiding.

The following new members were elected:

Misses Lois Kraeger and Kathleen Uniacke of San Francisco.

The speaker of the evening, Mr. John B. Price of Stanford University, spoke on the subject, "Some Common Birds of the Stanford Campus." His talk was illustrated by some very interesting motion pictures taken by himself.

Observations reported during the month:

Mrs. Amelia Allen: April 27, Berkeley, Tanager.

Morgan Harris: April 28, Mills College, Varied Thrush.

F. M. Jencks: May 13 and 14, Oakland, ranging from his yard to Mosswood Park, Long-tailed Chat; May 22, Oakland at Rockridge, Cedar Waxwings and Band-tailed Pigeons; at Lake Temescal, Anthony Green Heron.

Mrs. Bessie Kibbe: May 1, Mill Valley, Olive-sided Flycatcher.

Commander and Mrs. Parmenter, April 20, near mouth of Russian River, two Holboell Grebes in summer plumage; April 8, Cliff House rocks, sixty Black Turnstones.

Carl Smith: May 15, Lake Merced, between 400 and 500 Cedar Waxwings.

Mrs. Otis H. Smith: May 5, San Anselmo, Golden-crowned Sparrows.

Mrs. A. B. Stephens: May 7, Golden Gate Park, Cedar Waxwings; May 14, Spotted Sandpiper, Red Phalarope in breeding plumage.

A. B. Stephens: May 21, Lake Merced, Crow, Duck Hawk.

Robt. Taylor: May 8, Alameda, Pipit, a late date.



Book Notice: "Introduction to Ornithological Nomenclature," by Mary Ferguson Coble and Cora Smith Life, explains and teaches the pronunciation and derivation of multi-syllabled bird names. Price \$1. Wm. B. Strauble Printing Company, Los Angeles.

Audubon Association of the Pacific

For the Study and Protection of Birds

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Corresponding Secretary.....	C. B. Lastreto.....	260 California St., San Francisco
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Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 P. M., Room 19, Ferry Building.

Address Bulletin correspondence to Mrs. A. B. Stephens, Editor, 1695 Filbert St., San Francisco.

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